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ABSTRACT

This packet consists of a tutor's guide and the first two booklets of "The Women's Series." The series is part of a program of a national literacy campaign dedicated to women who cannot read well enough to use literacy skills in everyday life. The two booklets focus on child care because that is such a major concern for so many women. They are written at a fourth- to sixth-grade reading level, using basic language and clear illustrations. The titles of the two booklets are "Kids Alone, Safe at Home" and "Child Care Choices." Each concludes with a checklist for the user to complete. The tutor's guide offers suggestions for how to use the booklets in the series. It contains general tips as well two sections that suggest a variety of other specific activities for use with each booklet. All activities teach reading, writing, and thinking skills while helping learners apply relevant information to their own lives. (YLB)

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The Women's Series

Kids Alone,
Safe at Home
Child Care Choices
Tutor's Guide

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The Women's Series

Kids Alone, Safe At Home.

Coors
LITERACY. PASS IT ON.

American Red Cross

"Hi! My name is Kim and I have two school age children.

I just got a new job that I like a lot. And I am starting a class to get my high school diploma.

I feel good about what I am doing to make a future for my family and myself. But I have a big worry. With work and class, I won't get home until after my kids are out of school. And on some mornings, I will have to leave home before they do.

I have never left them alone before. Can they handle it?"

What can Kim do to make sure her children will be okay when they are home alone? What can you do if you need to leave your children by themselves? Here are some tips that helped Kim. These tips can help you, too.

Before your children stay home by themselves for the first time, sit down and think about any problems that might come up. Think about how you can make it easier for your children.

Then talk to them. Tell them why you will have to be away from home. Tell them that they are going to have to help by taking care of themselves when you are gone.

Walk your children around your house or apartment. Show them how to turn the heat on. Point out what might make a strange noise, like the furnace starting up.

Show them where the flashlight is, in case the power goes out. Show them where you keep fresh batteries, and how to put them in.

Point out the smoke detectors and tell them to leave the house right away if one ever goes off. Tell them not to use matches or candles when you are not home.

Show them where you keep the first aid kit. Tell them not to take medicine without checking with you.

Tell your children if they can use the stove or microwave when you are not home. If you let them cook, make sure they know how to do it safely.

Set it up so that they can call certain neighbors or relatives, if they ever have a problem and can't reach you. Keep a list of these names and numbers by the phone or by a spot where you leave change for the pay phone.

Put emergency numbers like 911 on this list. And put your home address and phone number on it, too. If your children ever make an emergency phone call, they might be too scared to remember these things.

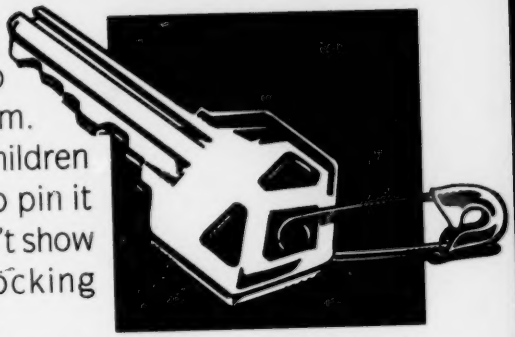
Tell your children what they need to do as soon as they get home each day, like lock the door and call to let you know they are home safe. Remind them to pull the shades when it gets dark.

Go over house rules, like who can come over, how much TV they can watch, and what chores they need to do. Write up your list of house rules, and leave it on the refrigerator.

Have your children practice answering the phone. Teach them to say something like "my mom can't come to the phone right now" when the caller asks for you. This way the caller won't know they are alone.

Teach them what to say if there is a knock at the door. Tell them not to open the door unless it is someone that you have said can come in.

Have a fire drill. Talk about different ways to get out, and practice them.

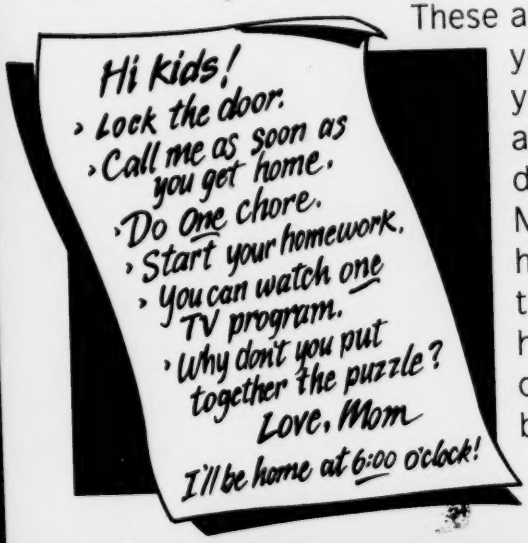


Give each of your children a key. Show them how to pin it inside a pocket so it doesn't show or get lost. Practice locking and unlocking the door.

Make an extra key and leave it at a neighbor's or in a hiding place, in case your children lose theirs.

Try to make sure your children are not alone too long. Sign them up for after-school programs at the school, church or temple, library or community center.

Have a plan to keep your children from arguing when they are alone together. Make each child a list of fun things to do to keep busy, like read a book or work on a hobby. Set up a "time out" place in your home where one child can go when he or she gets too angry. And let your children know they cannot hit or be mean to each other. Finally, lock up all medicines, alcohol and weapons.


Hi kids!
• Lock the door.
• Call me as soon as you get home.
• Do One chore.
• Start your homework.
• You can watch one TV program.
• Why don't you put together the puzzle?
Love, Mom
I'll be home at 6:00 o'clock!

These are some of the things you can do to prepare your children for being alone. Each day you can do some preparing, too. Make sure there is a healthy snack for them to eat when they come home. And leave a light on so the house will not be dark when they come home.

For those mornings when you leave first, have your children get their clothes and school things together the night before. Make sure they wake up with time to get ready, so they don't forget their keys or other things they have to do.

Always let them know what time you will be home. If you are going to be late, call and tell them. When you do get home, ask how things went. Help them work out any problems they are having.

You know your children best. You know when they are ready to stay at home alone. Even so, you probably worry about them. But you can feel better knowing that you have prepared them to take care of themselves.

Important! In many parts of the U.S., you cannot leave children at home by themselves until they reach a certain age. Make sure you know the law where you live!

CHECKLIST

Show your children:

- ☐ Where things are in your house and how they work.
- ☐ Things in your house that might make strange noises.
- ☐ Where the flashlight and first aid kit are.
- ☐ How to be safe in the kitchen.

Talk with them about:

- ☐ Who to call or where to go if there is a problem.
- ☐ What they need to do as soon as they get home.
- ☐ House rules.

Have them practice:

- ☐ Safe ways to answer the phone and door.
- ☐ How to get out if there's a fire.
- ☐ Locking and unlocking the door.

Prepare for them:

- ☐ A phone list.
- ☐ Change for the pay phone.
- ☐ A list of house rules.
- ☐ An extra key.
- ☐ A "time out" place.
- ☐ Healthy snack food.

Keep your children busy:

- ☐ Give each child ideas of fun things to do.
- ☐ Sign them up for after-school programs.

Protect them:

- ☐ Lock up all medicines, alcohol and weapons.
- ☐ Put up smoke detectors and check that they work.

And remember to:

- ☐ Plan ahead so your children have time to get ready in the morning.
- ☐ Leave lights or a radio on for when they come home.
- ☐ Leave little notes.
- ☐ Let them know what time you will be home. Call if you'll be late.
- ☐ Ask your children how things went while you were gone.
- ☐ Help them work out any problems they are having.

Coors "Literacy. Pass It On."
311 Tenth Street, NH 420
Golden, Colorado
80401
1-800-525-0308

Dear Reader,

We hope you enjoyed this booklet. We have published it to help the millions of American women who are learning to read. This booklet gives good information for children who stay home alone.

If you want to improve your reading or writing, there are programs to help you. There are programs that can help you study for your high school diploma, too.

If you would like to know about programs in your area, call the **Coors Literacy Hotline** at **1-800-626-4601.**

Sincerely,
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Nancy Williams
National Program Manager

Published by the Women's Program, Coors "Literacy. Pass It On." P.O. Box 46666, Denver, CO 80201, 1-800-525-0308.

Co-sponsored by the Oregon Trail Chapter of the American Red Cross, 5151 N. Vancouver Avenue, Box 5200, Portland, OR 97208, 503-284-0011.

Written by Catherine Baker, M.A. Education, University of Virginia. Ms. Baker is a writer specializing in plain-language communications and is the former executive director of Push Literacy Action Now, Inc., Washington, D.C.

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Child Care Choices.

LITERACY. PASS IT ON.

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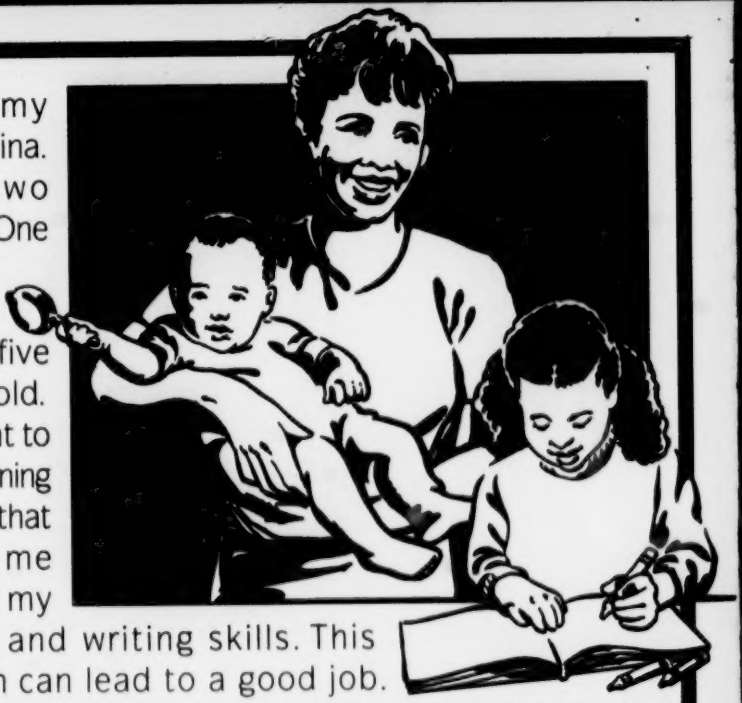

"Hello, my name is Tina. I have two children. One is three and the other is five months old.

I want to take a training program that will help me improve my reading and writing skills. This program can lead to a good job. But what about my children? I need someone to watch them.

I want my children to be safe and happy. I think I will do better in class if I know they are okay. How can I find the right place for them?"

How can Tina find good care for her young children? What can you do if you have young children and need to go to work or class? Here are some tips that helped Tina. These tips can help you, too.

When you need to find child care, first think about the kind of care you need. Do you need care for a baby or an older child? What times will you need care? What locations will work for you, so that you don't spend too much time going back and forth? How much can you afford to pay, and where can you go for help with costs?

Next, look at the choices. One choice is to have someone watch your children in your home. This can be a good choice because your children are used to their home. When they stay at home, your children don't have to be packed up and taken to another place. This can be easier for them and you.

Another choice is to take your children to someone else's home. A good thing about this plan is that it can cost less than care in your own home. Your children will be in a place that's like what they are used to. And there probably will be other children there, so your children can have playmates.

One problem with home care is that if the person you hire gets sick, goes away or quits, you don't have anyone to watch your children. This can be hard on your kids, too, if they were close to the person who took care of them.

A third choice is a child care center. Here there are more children and the teachers are trained. Centers are set up for children so they have lots of toys and play space. Most centers are open long hours. Some are open nights and weekends, too. And you don't have to worry about what to do if someone gets sick or quits.

However, a child care center may not work for you because some centers don't take young babies or children who are not toilet trained.

Whether you choose home care or a child care center, check it out carefully. Look for a place that is clean and neat. Look for a place that is safe. Stairs should have gates. Play areas should be fenced in or closed off so that children can't wander away. Cleaning products and other dangerous supplies should be locked up. There should be working smoke detectors and a first aid kit that people know how to use.

Babies need a place where there is room to crawl and explore. Older ones need space to run, jump and climb. There should be lots of toys, books and play equipment that are right for the ages of your children. And there should be enough adults to watch over all the children in their care.

Check out the people who will take care of your children, too. They should know how children learn and grow. They should know how to keep children active and learning.

They should rock, hug, talk and play with babies. They should set nap, meal and play times around each baby's schedule.

In group care ...

There should be no more than 8 babies in a group.

There should be no more than 14 children age 2-3.

There should be no more than 20 children age 4-5.

Each group should have at least 2 teachers.

They should give older children this kind of attention, too. They should be kind and firm, speak clearly to the children and teach by example, so that the young ones learn good habits. And they should let the children make some of their own choices, like what to play, when to play with others, or when to just play alone.

Finally, they should think like you do on how to bring up children. And they should be willing at all times to talk to you about how your children are doing.

There are places that can help you find child care. To find these places, look in the phone book under "child care resource and referral," ask at the library, or call your state or county department of human services.

There are many programs that help families with child care costs. But often, you have to ask to find out about them. Ask your job counselor, caseworker, or training program director. Ask at your church or community center. Ask other parents. Some child care programs can find you help with costs, so ask them, too.

Another way to save costs is to take turns watching the children with a friend or relative. That way both of you can have time free each week to go to class or work.

Before you make a choice on child care, visit several places. Talk to the people in charge. Talk to other parents who have children there.

Once you have chosen a place, keep a close eye on it. Call during the day. Stop by when they don't expect you. When you drop off or pick up your children, ask how things are going. If your children are old enough, ask them how things are going, too.

You know your children best. So look around carefully. That way you can find the child care that is right for them.

CHECKLIST

Think about:

- ☐ Your children's ages and needs.
- ☐ The times you need care.
- ☐ Child care locations that will work for you.
- ☐ How much you can afford to pay.
- ☐ Where you can go for help with costs.

Look at your choices:

- ☐ Care in your home.
- ☐ Care in someone else's home.
- ☐ A child care center.

Look for a place that:

- ☐ Is clean and neat.
- ☐ Is safe for children.
- ☐ Has room for children to play, and fun things to play with.
- ☐ Has enough adults to watch the children.

Look for a person that:

- ☐ Knows how children learn and grow.
- ☐ Has ideas of how to keep children active and learning.
- ☐ Thinks like you do on how to bring up children.
- ☐ Will talk to you about how your child is doing.

Before you make a choice:

- ☐ Check with your church, library, and yellow pages to make a list of several places.
- ☐ Visit more than one.
- ☐ Ask if you can get help with costs.
- ☐ Talk to other parents who have children there.

After you make a choice:

- ☐ Call during the day.
- ☐ Stop by when they don't expect you.
- ☐ Ask how things are going each day.

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Golden, Colorado
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1-800-525-0308

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If you would like to know about programs in your area, call the **Coors Literacy Hotline** at **1-800-626-4601.**

Sincerely,
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Nancy Williams
National Program Manager

Published by the Women's Program, Coors "Literacy. Pass It On." P.O. Box 46666, Denver, CO 80201, 1-800-525-0308.

Co-sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1509 19th Street N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036, 1-800-424-2460.

Written by Catherine Baker, M.A. Education, University of Virginia. Ms. Baker is a writer specializing in plain-language communications and is the former director of Push Literacy Action Now, Inc., Washington, D.C.

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Tutor's Guide.

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Coors "Literacy. Pass It On"
311 Tenth Street, NH 420
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80401
1-800-525-0308

Dear Tutor,

As a literacy tutor, you are well aware of the fact that millions of women in this country can't take advantage of print information on issues they care about. The problem often has as much to do with available reading material, usually written at a high school or college level, as it does with reading skills.

It is for these women that we have created *The Women's Series*. The booklets in this new series focus on issues of special interest to women and are written at a fourth to sixth grade reading level, using basic language and clear illustrations. Thus we are making critical information available while providing a positive, meaningful reading experience to women with limited literacy skills. We are distributing the booklets nationally through literacy programs, women's organizations, community groups, government agencies and other networks, in order to reach as many women as possible.

The first two booklets in *The Women's Series* focus on child care because that is such a major concern for so many women. In particular, child care has been found to be a significant obstacle for women seeking to attend or remain in a literacy program. To be sure that our booklets carry the most useful and current information, we partnered with the National Association for the Education of Young Children to produce *Child Care Choices* and with the American Red Cross to develop *Kids Alone, Safe at Home*.

We believe the booklets in *The Women's Series* are ideal for literacy instruction because adult women enjoy reading about issues that matter to them. Women seeking to improve their reading skills want and expect their efforts to provide some immediate benefits, and so they appreciate working with relevant and useful materials.

This *Tutor's Guide* offers suggestions for how to use the booklets in *The Women's Series* to create successful learning experiences for women. Good teaching takes preparation, and the rewards are worth it—enjoy!

Sincerely,
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Nancy Williams
National Program Manager

General Tips

If you plan carefully, you can make these booklets relevant in a variety of contexts.

For women who need to make a child care choice or to prepare their children to take care of themselves at home, the specific information in these booklets can help address this need. For women who want to join the workforce or sign up for training or education, the information can help them plan how to do that while safely providing for their children.

For women who already have child care arrangements or whose children already spend time by themselves at home, the information can help them re-evaluate their situations. Women with no foreseeable child care needs may still be interested in an issue that affects so many other women.

Whoever your learners are, you will want to consider how to introduce these booklets in a way that relates the material to their specific situations:

Have you thought about what you're going to do after your baby is born? Here's a booklet that can help you plan ahead.

I know you worry when you're working the afternoon shift and your kids are at home by themselves. This booklet can give you ideas for keeping them busy and safe.

One strategy for making material relevant is to discuss the topic beforehand: **What kind of child care is best for children? When is it okay to leave children at home by themselves?** After you have read and discussed the booklets, ask learners if and how their opinions have changed.

Another way to make this material relevant is to create a "mothers' discussion group" in your literacy program. This group could read and exchange information on child care and other issues that concern them such as child development or handling teenage children.

Keep in mind that some learners may not be comfortable sharing with you their private concerns such as struggles with child care. If this is the case, keep the context impersonal by introducing child care as an issue that affects women generally. As you go forward with the topic, learners may choose to reveal their personal needs and experiences.

In any event, when you introduce these booklets, use them as you would any other text. Do pre-reading activities, such as discussing the cover picture and titles, to get readers thinking ahead to the kinds of language and ideas they can expect. Have readers use the inside illustrations as reading aids. Rely on readers' experiences to make sense of the text: **Why is it a good idea to drop in unexpectedly on your child care provider? What does it mean to teach your children to be safe in the kitchen?** Create vocabulary and spelling exercises from the text. Use the checklists to verify readers' understanding of the material.

In the following sections we suggest a variety of other specific activities for use with each booklet. All of these activities teach reading, writing and thinking skills while also helping your learners apply relevant information to their own lives.

Kids Alone, Safe At Home.

- Brainstorm with learners to create lists of things that make strange noises in their homes – **a running toilet, a furnace starting up** – and lists of things their children need to know how to safely operate – **the microwave, window locks.** Help mothers organize "training sessions" for their children.

- Have learners make lists of "house rules" for their homes: **No running inside. Clean up after yourselves in the kitchen.** Suggest to mothers that they use their lists to discuss house rules with their children.

- Have each learner write up a list of numbers to keep by her phone. Help her research important phone numbers by looking at the Emergency Numbers page in the phone book. Be sure that she includes 911 and the local Poison Control number on her list.

- Another list you can create in class is one of activities that children can do when they are alone: **Put together jigsaw puzzles, work on hobbies, read books.** Encourage mothers to keep ongoing lists like this for their children.

➧ Have women share their ideas about how children should answer the phone and door when parents are not home. Write these ideas in skit form and use them for reading practice. Suggest to mothers that they use the scripts with their children.

Knock at locked door.
Girl: ***Hello, who's there?***
Voice: ***Hi, I'm selling magazine subscriptions.***
Girl: ***Just leave it by the door.***

➧ Obtain information about first aid and fire safety from your local Red Cross or fire department. Create lesson plans on what to do in case of an emergency and have each person draw up a fire safety plan for her home.

➧ Using recipe books, develop reading and writing activities about healthy after-school snacks for children. Learners can copy recipes, write grocery lists, and make weekly snack menus.

➧ Give learners practice in writing notes to leave to children or other family members.

➧ Find out if learners use the library so their children have books to read with their caregivers or by themselves. Tour the library with learners and have them get library cards if needed. Encourage mothers to take their children to the library regularly or ask their caregivers to do so.

➧ Help mothers find out about after-school programs and other community resources for children. Use the library visit to research this information, or use the phone book and newspaper. Have the women write up lists of questions to ask: **What activities do you do with children? How do I register my child?**

➧ Have your students discuss and/or write solutions to typical problems for children at home by themselves:

Marta's two boys always fight and bicker when they are left alone together. What can Marta do?

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Child Care Choices.

- Teach how to use the phone book to find your community's child care resource and referral agency, individual listings for child care, and information on financial assistance for child care. Use any materials these groups provide, such as referral lists or promotional brochures, for further study. You may have to rewrite the materials to match the skill levels of your students.

- Organize a discussion about specific child care experiences: **Who would be the ideal caregiver for your children? What kind of child care is used by you or people you know?** Turn the discussion into writing activities.

- Adapt from the many baby and child care books to create additional reading material on selecting child care, providing age-appropriate activities for children, and other relevant topics.

- Have mothers create lists of learning activities that their children would enjoy doing with their caregivers: **Take a nature walk, go to the library.** Suggest to mothers that they share lists like this with their caregivers.

➡ Other lists that can be created in class include questions to ask child care providers – **Do you have scholarships or sliding fees? Do you have openings?** – and questions to ask when taking a reference on a potential caregiver – **What kind of activities did she do with the children? Was she reliable?** Teach how to write questions before doing an interview and how to take notes of answers. Have learners practice these skills by role-playing.

➡ Have mothers organize the information about child care choices into personalized pro and con charts. Help them to analyze their needs and research alternatives so that they know all their options.

TYPE OF CARE	PRO's	CON's
Hire someone to care for my baby at my home.	• *Don't have to travel.* • *Baby's crib and things are here.*	• *Will have to find someone.* • *Might be too expensive.*
Take baby to my sister's.	• *She loves my baby.* • *She's good with kids.*	• *She's looking for a job — may not be able to help out for long.* • *Inconvenient — she's so far away.*
Red Balloon Children's Center.	• *Near my job.* • *Recommended by co-worker whose baby goes there.*	• *Expensive? Need to ask if they can help with costs.* • *Has waiting list right now.*

➡ Use Want Ads for child care as lesson material. Have learners read the ads to get a sense of the needs of other women with children. Have them practice writing Want Ads, too.

➡ Have your students discuss and/or write solutions to typical child care problems:

When Ann's three-year-old comes home from his caregiver, all he talks about is the TV programs he watched that day. Ann is worried that he watches too much TV. What can Ann do?

Resources

The Women's Series is part of an overall five year "Literacy. Pass It On." campaign sponsored by Coors Brewing Company to raise awareness about illiteracy and to bring literacy services to 500,000 adult Americans by 1995. It is the only national literacy campaign with a program dedicated exclusively to the one in five American women who cannot read well enough to use literacy skills in everyday life.

For more information write Women's Program, Coors "Literacy. Pass It On." P. O. Box 46666, Denver, CO, 80201.

The ***When I'm In Charge*** **Teaching Packet** (also available in Spanish entitled ***Ninos a Cargo***) includes a *children's booklet* that prepares youngsters for staying home alone; a *family packet* consisting of a parent guide, a telephone message pad and a wallet-size emergency information card; and several teaching tools. $10.50. Extra children's booklets are $2.00 each; extra family packets are $4.50.

The ***Working Parents - Happy Kids*** **Teaching Packet** includes a *parent's packet* of materials designed to help working parents choose child care plus a "Working Parents Survival Plan," as well as *step-by-step lesson plans*. $9.00. Extra parent's packets are $4.00.

Order from: American Red Cross, Oregon Trail Chapter, P. O. Box 3200, Portland, OR, 97208. Prices include postage; bulk rates are available by calling (503) 284-0011, ext. 101. Make checks payable to *Health and Safety Services*.

"Finding Help with Child Care Costs" is a fact sheet listing major federal child care programs, eligibility rules and contact persons. The fact sheet also describes other sources of financial assistance. Free, order from The Public Affairs Division.

Teaching Preschoolers: It Looks Like This...In Pictures is a paperback book that uses pictures and a brief text to demonstrate quality child care activities. $5.00 prepaid. Order #305.

The brochures ***"How to Choose a Good Early Childhood Program"*** and ***"Finding the Best Care for your Infant and Toddler"*** are available for $.50 each.

Order from: the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1509 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036-1426. 1-800-424-2460. Spanish language materials are also available.

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